St. Bodes 1-4 Geo Geog 1500 M1 Middle Eas M1
Bedouin M54

the group. Yet although tribal solidarity and discipline are conspicuous features, it has been the weakness of Badawin society throughout the ages that political combinations larger than the tribe have been achieved merely for a very short time. An outstanding leader has brought together a number of tribes into one larger unit, but union has proved temporary; and more often than not on the death of the leader, his organization has dissolved again into smaller groups. Large-scale political organization is therefore not a feature of Badawin society, and resulting inter-tribal feuds, inveterate warfare, political instability and inconstancy have had an effect not merely on desert and steppe life, but also on that of the settled lands of the arid borders. It is also possible to see why, in the absence of strong internal political organization, so much of the Middle East has in the past fallen under the control of outside powers.

To each tribe belong certain rights of pasture and occupation. The limits of each tribal territory are carefully defined, and generally comprise a summer and a winter camping ground. Exact size of territory usually has a certain relation to the physical force and prestige commanded by each tribe, and limits therefore vary from one period to another. Weaker tribes seek "protection" from a larger.

As a sample of tribal division, the distribution of Badawin in Syria is given below. It should be noted that in certain instances tribal territories cross international frontiers, and thus there arise political problems of administration. Agreements have been concluded between the governments concerned, whereby nomads in effect assume temporarily the nationality of the country in which they find themselves.

Because of the necessity for constant movement, the material culture of the Badawin is poor. Chief possession of the tribesman, after his animals, is a tent, usually black, and woven of camel or goat hair. When in good repair, these tents are quite waterproof—sufficient to withstand the infrequent, but severe downpours which occur—and the size of the tent, shown by the number of tent poles used, is an indication of the affluence and social standing of the owner. The interior is divided, on the right for men, and on the left for women. One side away from the wind is usually left open, with a coffee hearth in front. The coffee hearth is the social centre of the household; and the head of the family, although leaving the entire preparation of food to his womenfolk, will himself undertake the preparation and serving of coffee. True Bedu coffee is strong, devoid of milk or sugar, but

1 Dickens G-5 (1929-47) 1951 341 I Kuwait
Bedouins 1954

The Shepherd Boy

Chap. III

At 5 a.m. one of the men-servants gives the 'adhan (call to prayer) with which the day commences. It is still quite dark, but the prayer-call has roused the camp. The women also pray, but in their own tent. After prayers, the women whose duty it is to make the daily supply of *laben* (sour milk), start rocking her goatskin to and fro on the *mirjakah* (wooden tripod from the centre of which it hangs). According to the tribe they belong to, some women sing when at this work, others do not.

The woman of the house then orders a little bitter coffee or tea (a modern innovation) to be prepared and gives some to the shepherd and the camelherd, who with the dawn will start off on their day's duties. With the coffee she hands them a supply of dates; part of this is eaten on the spot and part put into a little leather bag as the day's ration. If coffee or tea is scarce, the men are given a bowl of milk. While this is being done, another servant whose duty later will be to go and fetch water, etc., looses the lambs from inside the tent, where each has been attached by a woollen loop to a central rope during the night, and allows each lamb to be suckled by its mother. This done, the lambs are tied up again. The grown-up animals are counted to see that no wolf has stolen one during the night, and off they are sent to graze in charge of the shepherd boy. As the sheep are weak from lack of fodder and the long summer, they will be sent a couple of miles or more. There the shepherd-boy amuses himself one way or another till the sun gets up and makes him feel inclined to rest. He thereupon plants his staff* in the ground and hangs his 'abba on top. This is enough to deceive the sheep into thinking the shepherd is standing near them and watching. They will not wander; the shepherd goes to sleep. There is no danger by day while he is in sight of the camp.

After the sheep go the camels. A few of these, being in extra poor condition as the result of the summer, find difficulty in rising. They are given a mouthful of dates to encourage them; one or two may have to be helped up, protesting with growls and bubblings as their tails are seized and given an upward twist. They are all ready now and the herdsman bursts into song of encouragement and leads the

* Called *mihjan*. *Mihjan* is the special stick which shepherds keep to keep their fellow-men or passers-sheep and lambs from wandering. Every one has one.

Night and long sleep take no notice of the *mihjan*, only the black sheep of Hem and Kenaan. [See Bible. "Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me"—here "staff" is undoubtedly the Arabian *mihjan*.]

L Dickson G-5 (1959-47) 1951 ME I Kuwait
Bedouins 1434

6/2 way, riding monkey-like on the hindquarters of one of the better-
218 conditioned animals, and looking as if every minute he would slide
• 4x2 off over the animal's tail. The herdsman's song is wild and weird,
[830] rising and falling in semitones. As often as not he starts off with a description of the beautiful grazing that his charges are going to find ahead of them. He pleads with his camels and says they are to trust him, their guide and helper. He it is who is leading them to pastures fair, and grass that is green and succulent. The camels seem to understand, for with sundry groans and moans, they slowly follow him in single file. As they disappear into the early morning mist, the last you see or hear of the party is the distant singing of the camelherd. Then all are swallowed up in the morning fog. Like the sheep, the camels will not go far. Five to eight miles is their limit just now. Grazing has been so pitifully scarce in their long summer camp they must be allowed to get fat slowly; presently they will go further afield. The camelherd does not sleep by day. His is a much more valuable herd. He watches, with rifle ready, even though there is not the slightest rumour of danger or trouble in the air. To while away the long day, he may look for truffles on the hillcops or occasionally try and catch a jerboa. In the main, however, he watches and watches till the time comes to go home.

6/2 The camels and sheep having gone out to graze and the sun being
2x4 up, the tent family will have a meagre breakfast consisting of a little tea without milk, and some dates. If the housewife is in funds she may issue a small ration of bread to all; more often than not they go without.

5/2 The daughter of the house with her small sister, or her girl friend
4x2 from the neighbour's tent, now starts off to collect brushwood for
3/8 the day's needs. '*Arfaj* is what they seek, and as this has a tough root, they arm themselves with a small axe and several yards of goat's hair [95] rope to carry home the firewood on their heads. Other children of from five to ten years old often accompany the girls to see if they can find an early flower or a truffle. It is their one way of enjoying themselves, they have few other amusements. The girls move off with strong healthy stride, their long sleeves bound behind their backs to free their arms, and their skirts hitched up at the waist to give freedom of movement. How straight and supple they are! Daily this looking

A Dickson G-5 (1939-47) 1951 Mf 1 Kuwait
Bedouins 1424

Fetching Water

in of firewood goes on, and the girls and common get in a two- or three-mile walk every morning. It is good for them and makes them strong, straight and fit to bear children later on, and they know it.

Two hours later they return, each bearing an enormous load of *'erfaj* bushes on their heads, and followed by the tired little mites who have gone with them. In the meantime the woman of the tent has not been idle. She, with her sister, or old mother if she has one to help her, has been sunning the family bedding (*lahaf*) and putting it away, or has been cleaning pots and pans from the previous night's meal and has tidied up the tent. She has sent off the spare shepherd to go and fetch water from the wells they have just vacated, perhaps 10 miles back. He takes for the purpose a couple of male camels kept back from the herd, on whom he loads up either two large camel water-skins, or four goatskins. This will suffice for the needs of the tent and its neighbours. Should a small *shemlis* exist near them, as is often the case after rains, the daughters of the house will once again be sent off with goatskins (*gawal*) to collect the water—(a *shemlis* is a small supply of water lying under the surface of a dry, sandy water-course which does not sink deep and disappear completely, because it lies on subsurface rock or clay). The girls scratch away the sand to a depth of two or three feet to reach the brown, muddy liquid. They ladle it into skins by means of a small cup (*fiddi*) of tamarisk wood, and keep it on one side for drinking purposes only. The water is at first opaque and yellowish, but the silt soon settles.

To keep the water-skins cool during the day, a bed of *'erfaj* bush is made just outside the women's quarters, and all skins are laid on the bed.

By now it is time to prepare the midday meal. If the family is a fairly prosperous one, rice will be cooked and made tasty with *samn*, clarified butter of sheep's milk, and all will sit down and eat their fill. If the family is a poor one, there will be no meal till sundown.

After the midday meal, the woman of the house will first clean the cooking pots, and then start weaving any cloth that may be required for the tent, or if the tent is complete she will work on a *gabe* or *mastad*, which in due course she will sell when she visits a town to do essentials. A *gabe* if well and artistically made will bring her in Rs.45 to Rs.50—a vast sum of money for a Bedouin family.

L Dickens G-S (1929-47) 1951 MI I Kuwait
Reference MSS

343 These ropes are attached to the ground by wooden pegs if the ground
342 is firm, but if the soil is sandy the practice is to dig a hole two feet deep, tie the end of the rope round a bundle of *'arfaj* and bury the whole in the earth. An excellent anchor is thus formed, and a rope so treated rarely comes away. When a man first buys a tent, he purchases the poles separately, next the necessary rolls of tent strips of the lengths he requires, then the *gutus*, ropes, side poles, etc., and lastly the back curtains.

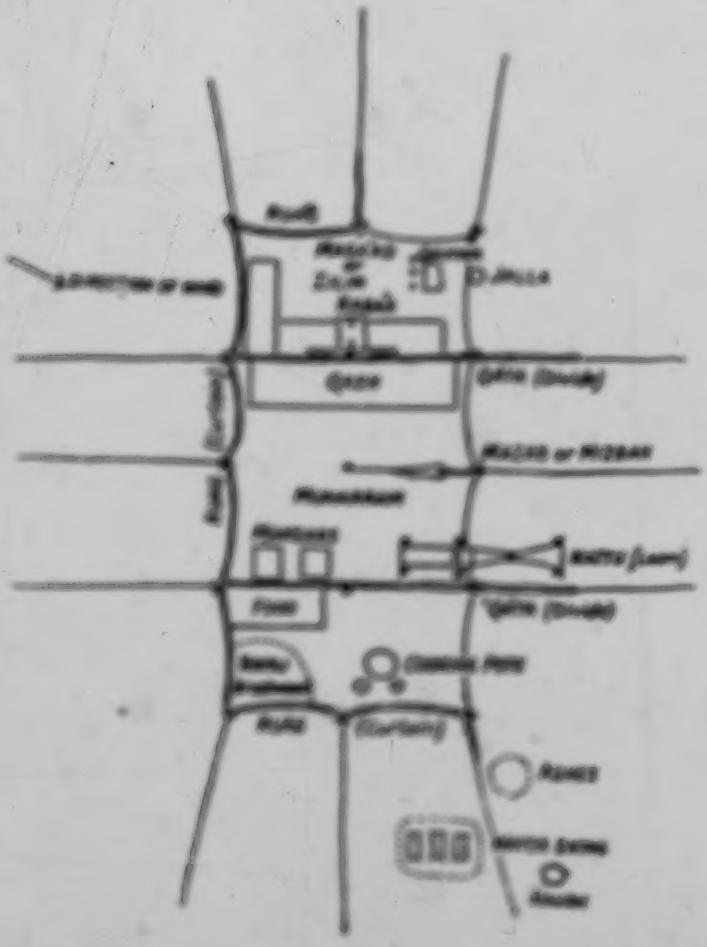
He then hands the tent strips to his women, who start sewing them together under the experienced eye of one of the older women. Much skill and care is needed to sew up a tent so that it stands straight and does not give way at any of the seams, which are carefully drawn together and sewn with extra-strong all-goats'-hair thread.

After the tent roof has been put together the *sarīja* (plural: *sara'ij*) have to be sewn on from side to side on the underside to support the poles and take the strain of the ropes. These are extra-strong white-and-black patterned strips 6 inches in width (like the Indian *sumar*). Immediately over the spot where the roof bears on the tent poles, two strips of wood are sewn into the tent roof, each 2½ feet long, so as to prevent the tops of the poles tearing open the roof. Each wooden strip is called a *gusba*. These wooden strips are not evident to the naked eye as they are rolled sausage fashion into the tent roof where the centre strips join. Each pole is placed exactly under the centre of the wood, and when in position does not damage the tent cloth. In the north proper holes are made for the tops of the poles in the tent ceiling, but not so among the tribes of Hasa and Nejd.

Lastly the *ridāda* (plural: *arwād*) or scratcher wood fasteners have to be sewn on to the ends of the *sarīja* on which the ropes are fastened to the tent sides. This is a very important operation, as there must be no weakness here. The ropes (always thick hempen ones) are now tied to the tent and everything is ready for pitching.

343 The pitching process is always done by the women, assisted by
342 servants and slaves, occasionally also by a young son. It is supposed to be the women's particular job in life. The head of the family (*rais al bait*) directs the operation, and it is surprising to see how every person has a particular task allotted to him or her, knows it and sticks to it at every tent-pitching. The daughters of the house, for instance,

A THREE-POLED BADAWIN TENT (Plan)



usually do the hammering in of the pegs with the long stone known as *al fās*, while the womenfolk attend to the poles and ropes, etc.

The following are the orders the owner of the tent gives to his women and servants in the form of a regular drill, addressing individuals by name. Of course they are accompanied by a lot of chat and talk which need not be detailed here.

L Dickson G-8 (1939-47) 1951 MI I Kuwait
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342. (1) "Spread out the tent *ya 'ajjaf*" (O my people) (from its rolled up position when taken off the camel's back).
(2) "Stretch out the ropes *ya mshidd*" (O children) (so that they are at right angles to the tent).
(3) "Anchor the rope ends in the ground *ya fukus wa fukus*" (O Su-and-So).
(4) or "Drive in the pegs and wind the ropes round them *ya Nasir*."
(5) "Tighten the ropes *ya Hazza, ya Wadha*."
(6) "Take a pull on the end ropes *ya Marzuk, ya Nasir*."
(7) "Affix the *majadim*" (front-side, support-poles.) This is done on side away from wind.
(8) "Raise the centre poles"—the men's job.
(9) "Raise the back side poles and remaining end side poles."
(10) "Now lay to and take a pull at all the ropes once more."
(11) "Now *rawwaga al hasir*, i.e. stretch the *rwag* or back and side curtains, and cover the lower edge with sand to keep them down."
(12) "Now affix the *gita* or partition curtains."
(13) Lastly, "Spread out the carpet and the *dawshaks* and get ready the women's and men's portions of the tent". Women's quarters centre and left (*marqad al harim*), men's quarters right (*marqad al rijal*).

The tent is now fully pitched and the women place their treasures and stores in the centre portion of the tent, including their linen (*mukwar, gita*, etc.), sleeping gear, blankets, food, etc., and transfer to the end compartment the cooking pots, cooking utensils, etc., turning it into a sort of kitchen.

MEN'S PORTION OF THE TENT

342. 879 In the men's portion of the tent are then unrolled a thick-woven carpet or two, the best *dawshaks* (mattresses), to sit on, and the master's own camel saddle covered with white or black sheepskin. Pillows (*mwasad*) are placed on both sides of the camel saddle, and also behind it for the guest's back to rest on, and generally the place is turned into a neat guest chamber for anyone who may come. The master now hangs up his rifle on a hook attached to the tent pole in the guest chamber, and prepares a fireplace to make coffee in the centre of the floor by digging out a shallow circular hole (*majdi*). This done, he gets out his row of three coffee pots (*dalla*), also a fourth "stock" pot, and lays them alongside the fireplace, together with the *mahmasa* (coffee roaster) and *yaul al mahmasa* (coffee-berry stirrer).

[sic] 915. 272.

A Dickens G-6 (1859-67) [85] MS I Known
Reference 1674

If she is pretty, attractive and the daughter of So-and-So, she will 542
easily find a dozen other men ready to marry her. 587
As for her children: she retains the small ones till they reach the 586
age of eight, and then hands them over to their father's care, but they are never far from her, and are allowed to come and see her as often as they like. Nay, if she is a clever girl she will keep on quite friendly terms with her former husband, and call and see his new wife regularly. That is quite common practice.

Where the Bedawin housewife has distinctive rights, is in the 542
management of the tent; she is *em al 'ahyál* (mother of the family) 586
as well as *raiyat al bait*. She holds the honour and good name of her husband in the hollow of her hand. Upon her falls the duty of providing for the guest, of cooking choice and tasty dishes, of turning out good fare, and generally bringing the good name of her husband into prominence among his fellow Arabs.

The mistress of the house never sees or mixes with strange guests, 542
but she knows all that is going on, for only a curtain partition separates 574
the women's from the guest's quarters.

The personal name of the lady of the house is never mentioned by the guest, or even by the host's own friends, she is *Um al 'Ahyál* or *Raiyat al Bait* only. Should a friend wish to ask after a man's wife, he will merely say to the husband, *Kaif hal illi warrak?* or *Eskan em al 'ahyál?* ("How is she who is behind you?" or "How is the mother of the children?"). Unpleasant inclinage is taboo.

Even more carefully guarded and shielded are a man's marriageable daughters. They are never seen at all, except by those on very intimate terms.

Jokes about a man's getting married, and so forth, are quite com- 542
mon, and the young Lothario about to get spliced is always the hero 542
of his companions, but never is the woman's name brought into this form of rough chaff. That would be *'ail* (a shameful thing).

The sanctity of a woman and her good name is most immediately 542
apparent in cases of war or hostilities between two tribes. 586

She it is who encourages her menfolk to go forth and fight bravely for her and come back triumphant. She it is, if the tribe has to be defeated, who uncovers her face, lets down her hair, and screams the warcall of the tribe wildly to encourage the young and old men to

L Durham C-1 (1929-47) 1951 Vol I Kuwait

Mss 6161 F 1

Good-looking Shepherd Girls

tussle with them in the old war days when I held charge of the Suq al Shuyukh and Nuaiyah areas. All are good fighters and of tough build, and all carry the very latest type of rifle or carbine with an abundance of ammunition.

The shepherd tribes leave the Euphrates about the 15th October of each year, and provided early rains (*wasm*) have fallen in the southern desert, move slowly south grazing on the new green shoots and drinking from rain pools or *khaburs* which, owing to the rock formation of the subsoil almost everywhere in North-East Arabia, sometimes lie for weeks before drying up.

During February and March the shepherd tribes cover the whole of the area lying to the south and west of Kuwait, and quite one of the pleasanter features of Kuwait life at this time of the year is to meet the large number of pretty shepherd lasses who are to be seen laughing happily and wending their way along the roads which converge on to the town.

These girls are usually accompanied by droves of small donkeys laden to the ground with curdled milk in skins, wool and firewood which they bring into Kuwait to sell, or again in the evening taking home their daily purchases of food, brightly coloured cloth, etc.

They are a very happy community and as a rule prefer to travel without their men folk, who stay with the sons to tend the flocks.

These *khabra* lasses, as they are locally called, all go unveiled in contrast to the Kuwait Bedouin women. Being for the most part pretty and good looking, they usually have a crowd of town youths loitering round the spot where they congregate to sell their wares. Like most of their sisters source home, they can drive the shrewdest of bargains, and give as good as they get in verbal exchanges.

The women with babies either carry them on their backs on their march, or tuck them into a saddle-bag thrown across a donkey's back. The two faces peering out just above the edge of the roomy bag are a most common sight.

In general appearance these shepherd girls, like their men folk, are strong and hardy, and easily ride their donkeys. They walk twelve to fifteen miles a day when visiting Kuwait, and on the same day in the evening return some six or seven miles out of the town, sleep on the side of the road when dark falls, and at dawn continue their

way back to their tents. No one ever molests them, and it would go hard with a mere man who attempted to interfere with a bevy of these tribal lasses on the march.

Hukra tents are not pitched close together, but in ones and twos, each in sight of a neighbour. This enables one tent dweller to come to the assistance of his neighbours all round him if necessary. The result is that large areas of desert country are dotted as far as the eye can see with little specks of two or three or even one black tent. The chief method of warning widely is in vogue only if peace reigns in the land. It is healthy, sheep are not crowded together, and grazing is consequently good over.

[illegible] Were there to be war, or even a rumour of war in the air, the shepherd tribes would either concentrate closer together by day and night, or make for home again.

The return to Iraq of the shepherd tribes takes place usually about the end of April or early in May when water becomes scarce and sheep have to get back to the Euphrates before the desert grazing dries up.

Just as they have made wool, butter, milk, ewe-cheese, etc., sheep in Kuwait, so with the money realised they take home rice, sugar, coffee, clothes for their women and girls, and presents for those who stayed behind. Their return home, therefore, though bad for Kuwait, is a joyous one for their relatives on the Euphrates.

To ensure good treatment for themselves in Kuwait and Sa'udi Arabia, the Hukra pay *shaikhish* or *mashlah*, consisting of gifts of young lambs, to the local Governor or Ruler, and they also pay *gabir* voluntarily, if water is in the air and they want to receive welcome protection from possible raiders. The Sa'udi Government officials are more in the enforcement of *gabir*, but the Shaikh of Kuwait, whose state derives benefit from the Iraq shepherds, always waives his right to it.

Kuwait is definitely the pasture for the annual departure of the Hukra, and their return the following year is always looked forward to by the majority of the people. Not the least to be missed are the merry laughing faces of these daughters of the Muntafiq on the Jahrah-Kuwait road, who joke with everybody and miss no opportunity of displaying pretty eyes and dainty tattoo-covered chins and

MJ.

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(Above) Weaving of Bedouin cloth. The upper, at either end of which a leather bucket hangs, was now pulled attached to scaffolding above the roof, and the weaver is constantly raised by hand—now by crank, as in the foto. The well-rope [illegible] of palm fronds, pulleys, buckets and troughs are brought down to the well by each family, and taken away after watering is complete. There was always an impatient crowd of Arabs and a milling throng of camels round the well, which was usually enhanced by visitors. (Right) To draw water fills the duty of filling the goatskins used for carrying water to the desert

P 399 (3)

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A [SEE P. 399 (A) -- ANALYST]